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Bulgaria: Background to methodology

The document, "*Bulgaria: Far from the eyes of society. Systematic discrimination against people with mental disabilities*", details Amnesty International's findings of its research in Bulgaria and its recommendations for reforms needed to bring psychiatric hospitals and social care homes into conformity with international human rights standards. Research for the report was conducted in close cooperation with the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, a human rights group that has conducted detailed research into the mental health system in Bulgaria, and draws considerably on its research of psychiatric hospitals.

In October 2001 and January 2002 representatives of Amnesty International, the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee and Mental Disability Rights International examined the legal provisions and procedures used to confine patients, living conditions and treatment in psychiatric hospitals and social care homes for children and adults with mental disabilities. Experts on the delegation included a psychiatrist, specialist in learning disabilities, mental disability law attorneys, a clinical psychologist, a forensic physician and a specialist in psychiatric health care administration and system reform. The delegates spoke to patients at three state psychiatric hospitals in Karlukovo, Patalenitsa and Kardzali, and in Sofia met the directors of other state psychiatric hospitals. They also visited five social care homes for children in Borislav, Dzhurkovo, Strazha, Mogilino and Vidrare, and eight homes for adults in Sanadinovo, Radovets, Razdol, Pastra, Podgumer, Dragash Voyvoda, Samuil and Cherni Vrh. Amnesty International and Bulgarian Helsinki Committee representatives made further visits to social care homes in 2002: in April in Dragash Voyvoda, in June in Oborishte, Gorni Chiflik, Fakia and Radovets, and in July in Kachulka, Tri Kladentsi, Radovets and Mogilino.

To see the full report, please visit <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/recent/eur150052002>

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